Religious, Cultural & Ethnic Holidays & Days of Observance

February 2019

This handout is to call your attention to just some of the many nationally and internationally recognized and/or celebrated diverse days of observance and religious/ethnic holidays that fall within the month of February 2019. We invite you to share it with the students, staff, and faculty you work with across campus. For more information, feel free to visit the Multicultural Resource Calendar located on the Office of Student Life’s Mosaic Center website: http://www.diversityresources.com/aa_gsr/index.php?key=adCaO2Shix6u

Thank you,
The Mosaic: Center for Culture and Diversity, Interfaith Center, and Queer Student Lounge Staff

Feb 1- Pagan and Wiccan : Imbolc begins at sundown

Feb 2- Christian : Candlemas
This religious holiday originated with the ancient Jewish custom that required mothers to present their first male child in the temple. As a Jewish mother, Mary would have presented Jesus on February 2. The day is associated with light and purification. The holiday takes its name from the custom of blessing the church's supply of candles for the year on this date.

Feb 2- Pagan and Wiccan : Imbolc
Imbolc, which like all Pagan and Wiccan holidays begins at sundown on the day before, is a celebration of fire and light and the return of life. It is also the holy day of St. Brigid, the Goddess of fire, healing, and fertility. Wicca is the common term for many different traditions of Neo-Pagan nature religions that celebrate seasonal and life cycles and revere a Goddess and a God. Most Wiccans celebrate eight Sabbats, or days of power, that comprise the Wheel of the Year: Samhain (the Wiccan New Year), Yule, Imbolc, Ostara, Beltaine, Litha, Lughnasadh and Mabon. Wiccans also celebrate thirteen Esbats, or ritual observances of the full moon, every year. Pagan and Wiccan traditions have a long history preceding that of any of the major Western religions. Originating as agricultural festivals going back for thousands of years, many Sabbat practices were incorporated into Roman, Greek, and other traditions and also found their way into subsequent Western religions. Pagans and Wiccans are not anti-Christ or in opposition to any religion. Their beliefs and practices focus on the earth's seasons and the natural cycles of the world. They stress reverence for nature and belief in ecological principles. As such, Pagans and Wiccans are largely pacifist in nature. Their only "rule" is to "harm none." Pagans and Wiccans believe that the divine is in everything, and that there are multiple deities and many different pathways to the divine. They also believe in reincarnation. The circle with five points, the "Pentacle," is the most common symbol used in Wicca. Its five points symbolize Air, Fire,
Water, Earth, and Spirit, in the circle of eternity. Countries with large Wiccan populations include the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, and Holland.

**Feb 3- Honduras : Suyapa Day**
This commemorates the day the 18th-century statue of the Virgin of Suyapa, the Patroness of Honduras, was discovered. Every year in early February the statue, which is considered to have miraculous powers, is toured through various parts of the country where thousands of people make pilgrimages to visit it.

**Feb 9- Lebanon : St. Maron's Day**

**Feb 10- Hindu : Vasant Panchami**
This festival marks the beginning of spring and honors Sarasvati, goddess of knowledge, music, and art.

**Feb 15- Buddhist : Parinirvana or Nirvana Day**
In the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition, this day marks the death of Buddha in 483 B.C.E. and commemorates his attainment of final Nirvana. The date is based on the Japanese Buddhist calendar.

**Feb 26- Baha'i : Festival of Ayyam-i-Ha (Intercalary Days) (2/26-3/1)**
The days from February 26 to March 1 adjust the Baha'i year, which consists of 19 months with 19 days each month, to the solar calendar. These days are celebrated as the Festival of Ayyam-i-Ha and are observed with gift-giving, special acts of charity, and preparation for fasting that precedes the new year.